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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 MEXICO 000944

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP
POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - EMBASSY MEXICO CITY

REF: A) MEXICO 398 B) MEXICO 1296

11. SUMMARY: During the six months from September 2008 to February 2009, Embassy Mexico City's Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) focused on the detection of fraudulent documents, the identification of prominent purveyors of fraudulent materials, and training in fraud detection and interviewing techniques in order to decrease the likelihood that mala fide travelers gain access to the United States. END SUMMARY.

EMBASSY MEXICO CITY FRAUD CONDITIONS

12. High poverty and limited economic opportunities in Mexico make the prospect of living and working in the United States, legally or illegally, very attractive to many Mexicans and third country nationals (TCNs) in Embassy Mexico City's consular district. Fraudulent Mexican identity documents and employment documents are relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain. Numerous "coyotes" are readily available to provide their services - sometimes at an exorbitant cost to applicants. Fraudulent Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBAs) and passport applications are a continuing problem. As a result, fraud is considered medium-to-high at post.

NIV FRAUD

13. As one of the busiest Nonimmigrant Visa (NIV) units in the world, Mexico City processes between 1,500-2,000 visas on a daily basis. As such, officers routinely encounter fraudulent documents. In order to demonstrate strong ties to Mexico and to overcome the presumption of immigrant intent under Section 214(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), applicants frequently present various fraudulent documents, to include employment documents, bank statements, professional credentials, and even legal identification. In this reporting period FPU has seen various fraudulent employment and business documentation, as well as genuine identity documents with false information.

14. At least one FPU investigator is stationed in the NIV unit at all times, to answer factual questions about Mexico, check possibly fraudulent documents, ask several quick questions of an applicant, or to conduct a more extensive investigation into a suspect case. In certain visa classes, FPU pre-screens companies and applicants.

15. In cases that cannot be quickly resolved, NIV officers and investigators have found the "Refer to FPU" function an effective tool in combating fraud. After the officer refers the case in the NIV system, the FPU investigator conducts an investigation, enters case notes, and then passes the case back to the officer to adjudicate. This process adds to efficiency and accountability.

Total Cases referred to fraud - 298
Cases confirmed fraudulent - 129
Cases no fraud found - 167

Pending investigations - 2

FPU also handled 2,576 minor NIV cases this reporting period.

16. This post encounters fraud in virtually all visa classes. The most prevalent types of fraud are detailed below.

a. TOURIST AND BUSINESS VISAS: On occasion, the fraudulent documents and questionable stories officers come across on the visa line lead to FPU investigations that uncover a higher, and at times more sophisticated level of fraud. Many of these cases are part of several wide-spread fraud trends that FPU repeatedly encounters.

i. "COYOTES": FPU carefully monitors the activities of "coyotes," individuals and businesses that often offer "guaranteed" visa issuances to their clients. Through painstaking record-keeping and surveillance of these agents, who often accompany their clients to the Embassy and wait for them outside, FPU has been successful in discovering their methods and building cases against them. When possible, FPU will take aside applicants using the services of a coyote and interview them separately in order to ascertain how much they paid the coyote, what promises the coyote made, and if the coyote supplied the applicant with fraudulent documents and coaching for the interview. As a result of the information gathered through such investigations, a number of coyotes have had their visas revoked under Section 212(a)(6)(E) of the INA and some have been turned over to the Mexican legal authorities.

ii. "CONSULTANCY" SERVICES: In a recent case, FPU investigated a local business purporting to assist Mexicans interested in applying for Nonimmigrant Visas. The business had its main office in the Sheraton Hotel next door to the Embassy. Using text search, FPU

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linked the owners to 10 cases in which fraudulent employment documentation had been presented. Former clients provided sworn affidavits stating that they had been charged upwards of 18,000 Mexican pesos (approximately 1,228 USD) for fraudulent employment packages, which FPU used to support a revocation of the business owners' visas under INA Section 212(a)(6)(E).

Undeterred, the business owners are in the process of moving their business to a street behind the Embassy. FPU has documented several recent cases in which the owners charge the equivalent of 250USD in order to schedule an electronic U.S. passport appointment. In at least one case, the business has refused to return U.S. birth documents to their client unless they are paid a large sum. FPU is currently working with Regional Security Office (RSO) and the local Mexican authorities to prosecute the business owners.

iii. VISAS FOR RENT: Recently, post has identified a fraud trend that involves teachers "renting" their visas to friends or acquaintances, who are also often teachers or posing as such. In one case, the officer noticed that the male applicant was 11 years younger than his purported wife, a rare occurrence in Mexico. The applicant presented his genuine school teacher credentials, the visa of his supposed wife, and a fraudulent marriage certificate. The applicant admitted to FPU that he had paid a coyote 5,000MXP (approximately 400USD) for the fraudulent package, and he was to pay 5,000MXP more if the visa was issued. The woman who "rented" her visa had her visa revoked under INA Section 212(a)(6)(E).

iv. SINGLE PARENT PRESENCE AT MINOR'S PASSPORT ISSUANCE: The consular section continues to monitor closely any case involving a minor with the code "4.1" in his/her passport. FPU previously convinced Mexican passport officials to include this code to indicate when parental permission to issue a passport was given from abroad. 90 to 95% of these types of cases involve a minor with one parent living illegally in the U.S. In a recent FPU visit to the Civil Registry in the state of Michoacan - the largest immigrant sending state in Mexico - FPU was informed that a full 30% of minors applying for passports have a parent living abroad.

v. ADOPTIONS "A LA MEXICANA": FPU often encounters cases that involve a particularly Mexican phenomenon: adoptions "a la Mexicana." In these cases the biological mother informally agrees

to give (or sell) her child to an interested third party, usually an acquaintance or a family member, thus circumventing adoption law. Often the receiving party has been unable to bear children, or simply wants to assist a friend who is otherwise unable or unwilling to care for the child.

In a recent case on the visa line, a Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) mother applied for an NIV for her newborn. After noting the 4.1 code in the child's passport, the officer was told by the mother that she and her LPR husband live in Los Angeles, CA but that she returned to Mexico to give birth. This unusual story, coupled with the fact that the mother would have been forty-seven years old at the time of birth and had no other children, prompted the officer to refer the case to FPU. The woman admitted that her cousin had put her in touch with a woman who was considering an abortion, as she had conceived while her husband was living in the U.S. The woman enlisted the help of a doctor in Michoacán to ensure that her name was on the birth documentation. The child was refused 214(b) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at post was alerted to the case.

b. GROUP INTERVIEWS: FPU Mexico City continues to closely monitor applicants who apply in groups. There appears to be a widely-held belief in Mexico that such visas are easier to obtain than those that are applied for individually. Once NIV has scheduled an appointment for a group (groups may include municipal employees, school groups, athletes, etc.), the case is sent to FPU. Family members are not accepted as part of the group unless they can prove their presence is absolutely necessary to the group. In groups with young children, however, this rule is relaxed to take into account their special circumstances.

For all groups, an FPU investigator assesses the proposed trip and runs the names through CCD. If the group seems to be legitimate, the applicants will continue with their interview as usual. If FPU has suspicions about a particular group or individual, FPU alerts one of the three officers who conduct group interviews. The officer then refers the entire group to FPU after enrollment where an investigator interviews members of the group to determine the existence of fraud.

Currently the NIV unit in Mexico City is working to schedule all group appointments through Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) in partnership with Teletech (an appointment call center) - as most other visa appointments are scheduled. FPU has ensured that all the

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information used in the pre-screening process will still be readily accessible to investigators.

The most common fraud found in groups occurs when applicants who are not legitimate members of the group pose as such. This phenomenon is particularly common with student groups (siblings or children of teachers being added as "students" when they do not attend the school) and cultural groups (non-performers who are friends of the director or legitimate member). In one recent case, a group of 10 and 11 year olds was traveling to Texas to play in a football match.

However, the consular officer noted that one of the children was considerably older than the rest of the group members. After questioning, the coach admitted that the applicant was not a legitimate team member but actually a brother of another player. In an interesting twist, the coach had an IAFIS hit from 2003 for theft. Given serious doubts on the ultimate motives and credibility of the coach, the entire team was refused under INA Section 214(b).

c. EMPLOYMENT VISAS: Mexico City interviews applicants in almost all employment visa categories. The types of prevalent fraud vary by visa class.

i. E VISAS: Generally speaking, E visas are not a large source of fraud. The most common type of fraud occurs when an applicant has abused his tourist visa prior to requesting E status. In one recent case a family of four applied for E-2 visas. The father had established a school in Illinois several years before, and said that he had been traveling between Mexico and the U.S. on his tourist

visa while managing the school. He said that the rest of his family had been living in Mexico, and that they had last visited the U.S. several months earlier. The son's fingerprints, however, revealed that he had been arrested for underage drinking in Illinois only weeks before the interview. The father and son confessed that they had been living in the U.S. for the past six months, and that the son had enrolled in school. The officer refused the family's application for E visas, and revoked the tourist visas of the father and son.

ii. H1B AND L VISAS: Though H1B and L visa approval rates are very high, Mexico City has persistent fraud problems in these categories. Most of the fraud arises from the fact that many of the applicants are looking for a way to immigrate to the U.S. While dual intent is allowed in these visa categories, the most common forms of fraud arise when the applicant's sole intention is to reside in the U.S. permanently. Applicants will overstate experience, education, or future job responsibilities in efforts to bolster their applications. They will also misrepresent previous employment to conceal periods of illegal presence in the U.S. and/or to hide the fact that - for L visas - they do not have the requisite one year of work abroad in the previous three years. Individuals may also set up shell companies as a means to live in the U.S. The most common false documents presented at the interview or in petition packages submitted to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are false pay receipts. On occasion, applicants present false educational or professional credentials.

In a recent case, a family with a one-year L-1 "new office" visa was refused a renewal visa as the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC) field research cast serious doubts on their business activity. The applicants were unable to physically describe their purported office building and there were many inconsistencies in their business registration. The officer refused the cases under INA Section 221(g) and submitted a petition revocation to USCIS.

iii. H2B VISAS: FPU works closely with the groups team in processing H2B applicants. Prior to the interview, the Fraud Prevention Manager (FPM) vets petitioning companies by checking PIMS for adverse field memos, verifying employer location using LexisNexis, and by consulting the H2B watchlist of fraudulent companies that is published by the Consulate General in Monterrey. The H2B-dedicated investigator conducts text searches in the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) to ascertain whether the petitioning company has applied at other consulates. If any adverse information is found at this stage it is sent to the H2B adjudicating officers for their review. Additionally, on the day of the interview the investigator pre-screens the applicants by conducting spot "pre-interviews." If fraud is suspected, the investigator will work with the officer to offer support during the interviews.

There are two major areas of fraud consistently encountered in H2B applications. The first concerns prior illegal presence in the U.S. that an applicant refuses to disclose. IDENT and IAFIS results often tell a different story than what the applicant reports. Officers have noticed a recent trend in which applicants with years of H2B visa experience attempt to cross illegally in between

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applications. Many of these applicants report that they feared that they would be unable to secure a petition in the future, given concerns over the future of the H2B program coupled with fears about the economy.

The second major area of fraud occurs when an applicant has misused a prior visa by working for a different company. Post has noticed a recent related trend in which companies no longer able to petition for workers or who have had fraud issues in the past enlist the help of partner or shell companies to petition for workers who will in reality work for the first company upon arrival. In a recent case, a large proportion of almost one hundred workers who had been previously refused under INA Section 221(g) at the Consulate General in Monterrey applied at Mexico City. After liaising with Monterrey on the case, post discovered that the workers had been petitioned by a hospitality company that was in fact a shell for a company with an

extensive history of fraud problems. The otherwise qualified applicants were refused under INA Section 221(g) pending a review of their petition.

With the support of H and L funds, FPU engages in various outreach initiatives in order to educate the Mexican public on the H2 program, with an end goal of debunking myths and protecting workers' rights. Recently, two FPU investigators traveled to the state of Michoacán where they presented on the H2B program at a workshop on migration issues sponsored by the Mexican Immigration Secretariat. Over 120 people attended, with participants from 90 municipalities (mostly former migrants and/or LPRs) as well as representatives from other Mexican government agencies and U.S. law firms.

iv. PERFORMER VISAS: There are generally two kinds of performer visa fraud - fraudulent applicants (usually hidden within a legitimate group) and applicants who previously abused their tourist visas by performing without a P1 visa. As with other group visa applications, FPU vets P1 applicants prior to the interview.

In a recent musical group case an applicant applied for a P-1 visa as a road manager. An IAFIS hit revealed that the applicant was arrested for forgery in 2007. When questioned, the applicant denied he had ever been to the U.S. However, the applicant's passport indicated that he had just returned the day before from overseas. Finally, the applicant confessed that he was not part of the musical group and was really just a friend of one of the artists. The applicant was refused under INA Section 9(B)(2).

v. RELIGIOUS VISAS: Before the advent of the petition-based R visa, fraud was commonly encountered. Drawing on specialized knowledge, FPU investigators are able to recognize fraudulent religious credentials and have on occasion discovered completely fake ministers, priests, and nuns.

In recent months, officers have interviewed applicants with approved petitions - all of whom have been well qualified. R officers received training on religious workers from the Church of Latter Day Saints - a denomination that sends many applicants to the U.S. With this training, the officers are now more confident in their adjudications.

vi. TN (NAFTA) VISAS: Most TN visa fraud cases involve applicants who present fake "cedulas profesionales" (legal proof of a professional degree), have overstayed their tourist or other visas in the past, and/or whose job duties differ greatly from those listed on the job letter.

Mexico City requires all TN applicants who are applying for professional employment that requires a four-year degree (per Appendix 1603.D.1 of NAFTA) to present a "cedula profesional." The ability of consular officers to verify the authenticity of "cedulas profesionales" on Mexico's Education Secretariat's website has proven invaluable in detecting fraud.

Some TN applicants have flagrantly overstayed their visas in the past. There have been several families who had been working and/or going to public school on tourist visas who then attempted to get a TN visa to regularize their status.

One major problem concerns discrepancies between the real job duties and the job duties stated in the job offer letter. Applicants either exaggerate the scope of their responsibilities or completely fabricate their duties in order to make them "fit" more easily within a TN profession. Given that there are only two categories of TN jobs - Scientific Technician and Management Consultant - that do not require a "cedula profesional," FPU has noticed that many applicants who are not professionally titled often misrepresent their job duties in order to qualify under one of these two classifications.

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IV FRAUD

¶7. Mexico City does not process immigrant visas.

DV FRAUD

¶8. Mexico City does not process diversity visas.

ACS AND U.S. PASSPORT FRAUD

¶9. Mexico City FPU investigated 86 passport and CRBA cases during this reporting period (49 major, 18 minor), as well as 19 other American Citizen Services (ACS) cases (most often LexisNexis searches to locate next of kin).

¶10. With the implementation of the air phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), the ACS unit saw a significant increase in passport applications. As the June 1, 2009 implementation date for the land and sea phase of WHTI draws near, post expected a similar up tick in passport demand, given that land travel is often the preferred method of entering the U.S. from Mexico. However, in recent months passport applications slowed and are now just beginning to increase. To date, the bulk of the passport application demand consists of minor children who have traveled to Mexico from the U.S. without travel documentation. These children have often been sent back to Mexico by parents who, documented or not, remain in the U.S. to work. Many of these children return at a very young age, often only days old, which precludes the existence of any U.S.-based documentation other than a birth certificate. Passport officers are insistent on seeing as much documentation surrounding the pre-natal care and birth of these children in the United States as possible before approving such cases.

¶11. A further complicating factor in these cases is that often the U.S.-born child will later obtain a birth certificate in Mexico, as many schools require Mexican birth registration in order to enroll. This phenomenon leads to many inquiries from USCIS adjudicators in the U.S. who have questions about these seemingly fraudulent double birth registrations. FPU verifies that the Mexican birth registration occurred after the U.S. birth certificate was issued by liaising with local civil registry contacts.

¶12. When post encounters a midwife instead of a doctor on a U.S. birth certificate, the officer consults the electronic Suspect Birth Attendant (SBA) List found in the Fraud Library section of PLOTS. Regardless of whether the midwife is on the list, the officer will often ask for extensive documentation of the birth. However, such cases often occur many years after the fact, and the documentation may be inconclusive. In these cases, FPU works to resolve the case at post through targeted interviews with the parents.

¶13. Post continues to see cases in which individuals apply for passports and/or CRBAs for minors who are not their biological children. In a recent case, a naturalized Philippine mother and a Mexican LPR father who normally reside in CA applied for a CRBA and passport for their four-year old son. They stated that their son was born in Mexico and presented a Mexican birth certificate. After questioning, the parents admitted that the child was in fact not their biological son and that he was sold to them for 2,000USD by a friend who was planning on having an abortion. They stated that they collected the child at a hospital in Sacramento, CA and had not seen the birth mother since and thus had no U.S. birth documentation for him. They acquired a report of birth from a hospital in Michoacan and then applied for a Mexican birth certificate, for which they paid 1,100 MXP (approximately 95USD and far more than the normal cost). Unable to determine the citizenship of the child, the officer refused the CRBA and passport applications. FPU worked with DHS at post to enter lookouts on the parents.

¶14. Mexico City has seen a number of imposter cases where an applicant applies for a passport at post but a passport under the applicant's professed identity has already been issued to a different person. Whether the person is a victim of identity theft or has given or sold his/her ID documents is difficult to determine. Usually the original fraud has occurred in the United States and is not discovered until years later. In these cases FPU works with the Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations (ARSO-I) to

initiate U.S.-based investigations where appropriate.

¶15. In one such recent case, an applicant presented his U.S. passport issued in 1998 during a renewal interview at post in November 2008. In 2006, a man claiming the same identity applied for a passport in the U.S. Diplomatic Security (DS) undertook an

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investigation as the subject claimed to be a first time applicant and his identity documents were recently issued. DS decided that this man was the true owner of the identity; he was issued a passport in 2007. The investigation notes stated that the subject served time in jail from 2002-2003. He said he did not know the man who was issued a passport in 1998. Interestingly, the man who applied at the Embassy in November 2008 said that he met the man who was issued a passport in 2007 in jail, as they were cell mates. The November 2008 applicant never returned to the Embassy with further identity documentation, and was thus refused as a suspected imposter.

¶16. On occasion, ACS is confronted with cases in which it is extremely difficult to verify U.S. citizenship. In one recent case, a man approached a consular agency office and claimed to be a destitute American citizen. At the Embassy the man could not provide contact information in relation to a repatriation process. FPU conducted a LexisNexis search which did not return relevant information on the subject who claimed to have lived his entire life in the U.S. and who spoke English quite well. The man refused to leave and was eventually escorted out of the Embassy by U.S. Marines and RSO personnel who needed pepper spray to subdue him. The following day the man approached a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that assists American citizens in order to request a bus ticket to the U.S. border. The NGO contacted the Embassy and ACS related its inability to confirm his citizenship. Two days later the subject was arrested by local officials. ACS requested that the Mexican authorities fingerprint the man. The A-RSOI queried the prints against IAFIS and the results returned a confirmed record for a Mexican national with a completely different name. The subject had been deported or voluntarily departed the U.S. five times since 1998, with his most recent removal occurring in October 2008. ACS has not heard from the man since.

¶17. FPU liaises closely with CA/FPP on all passport and CRBA cases in which the subject and/or a parent has a fraud-related hit in CLASS. In these cases, the officer contacts FPU who accesses the relevant PLOTS record and reviews the information. CA/FPP is always contacted in order to seek concurrence if the officer believes the claim to U.S. citizenship is credible or if more information is needed to adjudicate the case. CA/FPP is a constant source of support and guidance and responds rapidly to all inquiries from post.

ADOPTION FRAUD

¶18. Mexico City does not process adoption cases.

USE OF DNA TESTING

¶19. Post uses DNA testing in passport/CRBA cases where no positive proof of parentage exists. The most common scenario in which this need arises is when one or both parents were married to another person at the time of the child's conception or birth. In such a scenario, DNA testing is requested almost as a matter of course. DNA testing may also be requested when the AMCIT parent swears in his/her affidavit of physical presence that he/she was apart from the other parent at the time of the child's conception. Often this is simply a matter of the parent noting travel dates incorrectly, but if no other evidence can be found or developed in the interview to account for the discrepancy, DNA testing is often the only way in which to determine parentage.

¶20. When requested, the applicant is given information on how to pay for the DNA test at a designated testing facility in the U.S. Once payment has been received, an appointment is made at a local

laboratory for the applicant and his/her purported child to give swab samples for DNA testing. An officer and an LES are present when the samples are collected by a technician at the laboratory, and the officer initials over the seal of the samples collected. The samples are then forwarded to the U.S. for testing, and results are received at post in a matter of weeks. Post requests DNA testing from applicants on average three times per month. Approximately one out of every 20 tests results in the purported father being excluded as the genetic parent of the child.

ASYLUM AND OTHER DHS BENEFIT FRAUD

¶21. Mexico City has representatives from DHS and thus does not have any involvement with DHS benefits.

ALIEN SMUGGLING, TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME, AND TERRORIST TRAVEL

¶22. Post has encountered cases of TCNs and transnational criminals

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who capitalize on the systemic malfeasance and corruption found in the immigration and civil registry agencies of the Mexican Government to obtain genuine Mexican ID documents. As the drug war in Mexico reaches a fever pitch, FPU has worked increasingly closely with various U.S. Law Enforcement agencies at post to build revocation cases against visa holders with INA Section 2(C)(1) and 2(C)(2) ineligibilities.

¶23. Widespread forgery and alteration of documents undermine all efforts to combat document fraud in Mexico. Criminal intelligence supports the conclusion that any document necessary for travel can be purchased for a price in Mexico. Documents are produced by multiple organized criminal sources that have both sophisticated and non-sophisticated capabilities to forge and alter documents, provide false entry/exit stamps, wash visas, and provide false passports. The most misused and available documents are fraudulent birth records, which are often used as breeder documents to obtain a genuine Mexican passport.

DS CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

¶24. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Criminal Investigations Program and Visa and Passport Security Program are well established in Mexico. Mexico currently has six DS Special Agents who serve as ARSO-Is who are co-located in consular sections in Mexico City, Hermosillo, Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, Matamoros, and Monterrey. A seventh ARSO-I position should be operational in Guadalajara in July 2009, and Nuevo Laredo is also expecting an ARSO-I position in the near future. The Acting Deputy Regional Security Officer manages the entire program from Mexico City.

¶25. Once FPU has identified a fraud case and it appears to involve clear violations of U.S. law or evidence of criminal activity, the ARSO-I reviews the case for potential criminal case development. All criminal cases accepted by DS are reported monthly through DS channels to DS's Criminal Investigations Division. Significant cases, updates, and final disposition are then shared by DS in regular meetings with CA/FPP. Cases that have only a local nexus are passed on to the host nation authorities for prosecution and monitored by the ARSO-I for final disposition.

¶26. In a recent case, an NIV line officer contacted the ARSO-I after noting suspicious movements in a visa applicant's bank accounts. After reviewing the case, the ARSO-I referred it to DS for investigation in the U.S. for suspected money laundering.

¶27. A steady stream of H cases continue to be developed and referred back to the U.S. for investigation and prosecution. The program has been working regularly with KCC's fraud and analytical units to scrutinize many H visa petitions, as well as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces to bring to bear a coordinated multi-agency criminal investigation where fraud is suspected.

HOST COUNTRY PASSPORT, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, AND CIVIL REGISTRY

¶28. Mexico City's FPU continues to have concerns regarding Mexican passport security. While the Mexican passport itself features a number of effective security features, it remains very easy to acquire a legitimate Mexican passport with fraudulent birth certificates or other identity documents. Mexico City's FPU has shared with the Mexican Secretariat of External Relations (SRE) information on the "delegaciones" (local passport offices) that have a history of issuing Mexican passports to Central and South Americans, Europeans, as well as to Mexicans with false identities.

¶29. In a seemingly routine visa renewal case, a subject claimed to be born in Mexico City and presented a genuine Mexican passport. However, the applicant's fingerprints returned an IAFIS hit that revealed him to be the subject of an Interpol Red Notice and the owner of a completely different identity. The subject's Mexican passport was issued under a false name. Given that the subject's past U.S. visa was issued under the same name, the subject had evidently used his false identity for at least ten years. The subject is actually from Spain where he is wanted for bank fraud (with damages in the range of 50 million USD) committed in the early 1990's. ARSO-I coordinated with Interpol to have the subject apprehended when he returned to the Embassy to ostensibly collect his visa. The subject is currently in Mexican prison while Mexico and Spain arrange extradition details.

¶30. In late 2007 the SRE decided to start its own passport anti-fraud unit. With Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) funding, the SRE sent several members of their new anti-fraud team to Washington in February 2008 to observe and learn about USG anti-fraud operations. Ultimately an SRE anti-fraud unit should lead to

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stricter internal controls on Mexican passport issuances and thus to fewer applicants (for NIV and ACS services) with false identities but legitimate Mexican documents. Unfortunately, the unit will not begin operations until a new passport director is named.

¶31. As previously reported in Reftels, the Government of Mexico (GOM) debuted a new "G" series passport. In addition to some quality issues with the new passport, the GOM had been issuing two versions of the new passport simultaneously. As well as issuing both versions of the "G" series passport, the SRE continued to issue "F" series passports in order to finish their inventory of "F" passport books. Currently, it appears that the SRE has made the transition and is now only printing one version of the "G" series passport. GOM contracts a Spanish company - Indira- to produce its laminate passport books.

COOPERATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

¶32. FPU has an excellent working relationship with the SRE and good contacts with civil registries in the consular district. FPU has made valuable contacts in the financial and travel sectors through FPU-led training sessions on U.S. and Mexican travel documents. A strong relationship with local law enforcement has enabled DS to refer various visa cases with criminal implications to the relevant authorities.

¶33. FPU - with the support of ARSO-I - works closely with the Mexican Attorney General's office (PGR) on various issues. The PGR has agreed to start prosecuting double identity cases in which the applicant has a national voting card (IFE). Additionally, the PGR and DS have agreed to use a separate section of Mexican Law (referred to as Article 4) to prosecute particularly egregious fraud cases. Article 4 allows the Mexican authorities to prosecute Mexican citizens for crimes they have committed in other countries.

¶34. In a recent case, an observant LES enroller came across a passport that looked suspicious. FPU verified that the passport was indeed a fake, as was the copy of the IFE he presented. The subject said he bought the fake passport and IFE because it was easier than waiting in line. His fingerprint results told a different story.

The subject had been deported/voluntarily departed from the U.S. at least five times. He has at least ten charges from 1999-2007, including possession and sale of narcotics, drinking under the influence, and spousal abuse. During his criminal career, the subject has used at least five different names. ARSO-I contacted the PGR who came to the NIV section to place the subject under arrest. Interestingly, for legal purposes, the PGR considers the Embassy "another country" and as such, the subject's crime of presenting a false identity can be prosecuted under Article 4.

¶35. FPU routinely meets with the Mexican Education Secretariat (SEP) in order to return fraudulent "cedulas profesionales." The SEP then follows up with the PGR in order to prosecute these fraudulent professionals. Previously, ARSO-I presented various cases to the Mexican authorities in which practicing physicians had fake professional credentials. To our knowledge, none of these cases have been prosecuted.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

¶36. We would like to see more of our investigators taken for FSI Fraud Prevention Training as currently only two of the six investigators have been able to take the current course.

STAFFING AND TRAINING

¶37. Current positions that are dedicated exclusively to FPU and fraud prevention training received by each employee:

Fraud Prevention Manager (acting): Shelly J. Dittmar
(Fraud Prevention Manager course at FSI in Sept. 2006 and on the job training)

ARSO-I: Chad Reynolds (on the job training)

Junior Officer Rotation: Nicole Gallagher (on the job training)

Senior FSN Fraud Investigator: Mihai Ghitescu
(Equivalent of PC 542 taken in Fort Lauderdale, FL in 1998 and on the job training)

FSN Fraud Investigator: Francisco Osorio (PC 542 in March 2006 and on the job training)

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FSN Fraud Investigator: Fluviano Florencio (on the job training)

FSN Fraud Investigator: Juan Carlos Posada (on the job training)

FSN Fraud Investigator: Monica Lopez (on the job training)

FSN Fraud Investigator (H and L): Monica Madera (on the job training)

FSN Administrative Assistant: Alan Picazo (on the job training)

¶38. FPU provided anti-fraud training to 599 people in this reporting period, for a total of 100 hours of training. FPU trained 39 Foreign Service Officers, 51 LES and 509 outside contacts, including representatives from the financial sector, Mexican governmental agencies, and airlines. Building on the initial fraud training offered to newly-arrived consular officers, FPU began a mandatory "Fraud Refresher" course for consular officers who have conducted visa interviews for three months or more. FPU also started a monthly seminar series that educates officers on Mexican structures and institutions, to include various political, economic, and governmental topics. FPU led three city tours this period, two for consular officers and one for other members of the Embassy community.

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